

Iran, Germany said to reach deal

BEIRUT (AP) — A senior Muslim fundamentalist source said Sunday that Iran and Germany have reached a "gentleman's agreement," under which two German hostages in Lebanon would be freed as part of a wider prisoner exchange. The source, who spoke to Reuters on condition of anonymity, also said Iran was determined to remove all obstacles blocking the release of the Germans and up to eight other Western hostages in Lebanon. "Iran has taken upon itself to resolve all issues blocking the release, including the issue of the Hamadis," he said. The fate of two German hostages has been linked to two Lebanese brothers, Mohammad and Abbas Hamadi, imprisoned in Germany for hijacking and murder. The hostages, Heinrich Strietig and Thomas Kemper, are believed to be held by followers of the Hamadi's elder brother, Abdul Hadi, a senior security official of the pro-Iranian Hezbollah (Party of God). "The Germans have struck a gentleman's agreement with the German government that they would end all the Hamadi family links freezing the two hostages as part of the overall deal," the source said. "In return the Germans have promised that they would make a person to Mohammad Ali and Abbas several months after the Germans are released," he added.

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Berserk gunman kills 3 in Sidon

SIDON (AP) — A gunman went berserk in this southern port city Sunday, hurling grenades and dynamite sticks at random. Police said three people were killed and 8 wounded before the gunman was killed by Lebanese troops. A police spokesman said the assailant, a member of a disarmed militia that controlled Sidon during Lebanon's civil war, climbed onto a rooftop in the city's Kanaya suburb in the evening to stage his attack. "He had a bagful of grenades and dynamite sticks which he threw at pedestrians below him," said the spokesman. He said the dead included two members of the Nasrati militia and a woman passer-by. Army troops opened up with machine guns from a nearby checkpoint and killed the gunman, who for years had gone by the nom de guerre of Castro, according to the spokesman. He said it could not be determined what made the gunman run amok.

Likud delegation visits Egypt

TEL AVIV (AP) — A delegation of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's ruling Likud bloc left for Cairo Sunday where they planned to meet with Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa, a party statement said. The delegation of the Likud Young Guard, headed by party spokesman Gil Samsomov, will propose a "joint peace forum" to promote normal relations between the two countries, the daily Jerusalem Post said. Egyptian Ambassador to Israel Mohammad Bassiony saw the delegation off and told them he hoped their visit would signal the setting of "another stepping stone in the peace process," the Likud statement said. The delegation was to meet with Mr. Musa on their arrival and would also meet with Yousef Wali, deputy prime minister and minister of agriculture, and with young leaders of President Hosni Mubarak's National Democratic Party before their Friday departure, a party statement said. The eight-man delegation does not include parliament members and is the first official visit to Egypt of a delegation from the right-wing Likud party.

Afghan rebels free ICRC delegate

GENEVA (AP) — Afghan rebels Sunday released Alexandre Ghelew, a delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), who had been kidnapped on a mission Aug. 4, the ICRC said. Negotiations for his release had been under way with several opposition groups since Mr. Ghelew's abduction north of Kabul, according to officials of the All-Swiss humanitarian organization. The group that held him was never identified and the kidnappers' motives or claims were not disclosed by the ICRC which said that Mr. Ghelew was in good health.

Albanian minister visits Israel

TEL AVIV (AP) — Albania's Foreign Minister Muhamet Kapllani arrived in Israel Sunday and is expected to sign an agreement establishing diplomatic relations with the Jewish state. Albania, which is about 70 per cent Muslim, is suffering from severe economic crisis and is hoping that the Jewish state can provide it with economic, health and agricultural aid, Israeli officials said. Mr. Kapllani is the first Albanian diplomat to visit Israel. During his three-day stay, he is scheduled to meet with Israeli leaders, including Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and Foreign Minister David Levy. "I have come on a mission of friendship. We shall be signing a memorandum to establish diplomatic relations and this should be seen as an historic event," Mr. Kapllani said upon arrival. In April, most of Albania's Jewish community was brought to Israel in a secret operation. Fewer than 50 of about 350 families remain today in the Balkan state. Albania, Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union are the last remaining east European countries who do not have full diplomatic relations with Israel.

Egypt and Syria said to accept Arab talks ahead of peace conference

By Sana Atiyeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Syria and Egypt have accepted to attend a meeting of the five "confrontation Arab parties" before the proposed Middle East peace conference in October, a senior Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) official said Sunday.

PLO Executive Committee member Suleiman Najjab said that Syria told a visiting Palestinian delegation last month it was ready to take part in a meeting that would include the PLO, Jordan, Egypt, Syria and Lebanon to coordinate a united position before the peace conference starts.

"During our last visit to Syria a month ago, they told us that they would attend such a meeting," Mr. Najjab told the Jordan Times. "Egypt had expressed its readiness for the meeting before that," he added.

The PLO had called for the meeting of the four Arab countries neighbouring Israel and the PLO to coordinate strategy vis-a-vis the peace conference called for by the U.S. and the Soviet Union to be held in October.

Jordan accepted the idea from the beginning and Prime Minister Taher Masri earlier this month called for speedy moves to convene the meeting as soon as possible.

"Syria previously had some re-

King visits Syria today

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein is scheduled to pay a visit to Damascus today for talks with Syrian President Hafez Al Assad on the ongoing efforts for convening a Middle East peace conference, informed sources said.

servations over this meeting," Mr. Najjab told the Jordan Times. The proposed gathering, he said, will aim at arriving at a united Arab position in peace talks with Israel and committing all Arab parties involved to that," he added.

The Gulf crisis created deep differences among Egypt, Syria and Lebanon — which sided with the U.N.-led coalition against Iraq — on the one hand and Jordan and the PLO who opposed a military solution to the Gulf crisis.

Analysts say that it is a foregone conclusion that Syria's acceptance to take part in the meeting means Lebanon will follow suit.

Mr. Najjab would not com-

ment on the form and timing of the meeting.

"When the time comes, we'll see," said Mr. Najjab, who leads the Palestinian Communist Party, which was given a seat in the PLO Executive Committee in 1987.

Earlier Sunday, the PLO official met with Prime Minister Masri and Foreign Minister Abdullah Ensour during which he delivered a message from the PLO leadership to the Jordanian government. Mr. Najjab would not elaborate on the details of the message.

However, he said the purpose of his visit was also to pave the way for a visit by a high-ranking PLO delegation that would coordinate the organisation's position on the peace conference with Jordan.

Jordan has offered a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to take part in the conference, and the scheduled visit by the PLO delegation, which may include Chairman Yasser Arafat, is expected to focus on the form of the delegation and agreement on the outcome of the conference.

Mr. Najjab said the focus of his talks Sunday was on "the content of the peace process and not the form of the delegation because we are flexible as long as the content of the gathering is Palestinian rights, including the right to self-determination,

(Continued on page 5)

CBJ revokes export guarantee requirement

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) announced that it was canceling a 1988 standing order which requires exporters to furnish guarantees that proceeds of Jordanian exports in foreign currency will be repatriated home.

The guarantee requirement order was issued by the CBJ in July 1988 to ensure the return to the country of badly needed foreign exchange.

According to an official statement quoted by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, the revocation of the order comes in line with the CBJ's new policy of rescinding all restrictive controls over foreign currency with a view to stimulating economic activities in the Kingdom, especially those pertaining to the sectors of industry and export.

"These releases ... do not free

the people involved from being interned again if judiciary services find that they have committed crimes or wrongdoing," Prime Minister Sid Ahmad Ghazali said in a communiqué Saturday.

The new step, according to the official, comes in the light of the positive developments in the local

money markets over the past two years, and reflects full confidence in the country's monetary policies as spearheaded by the CBJ.

The CBJ official said that the step was taken "in harmony with the CBJ's policy, which aims to end control and restrictions over foreign currency in Jordan, to encourage national exports which bring in foreign exchange, to remove hurdles that used to obstruct the free outflow of national exports and to save time, effort and expenses incurred by the exporters in the implementation of the 1988 orders."

He said that the new move could help industrialists and exporters to play a "more active role in Jordan's economic development at this stage with most beneficial results to the country's balance of payments in general and the balance of trade in particular."

In a West Bank clash, Arab reports said Mohamoud Zakarne, 30, was shot in the chest as he stood on his balcony, when soldiers acted to quell a protest during a curfew.

The army confirmed a body from Qabatiya was brought to Jenin hospital and said it was investigating.

Mr. Zakarne, according to an AP count, was the 847th Palestinian to be killed by Israelis during the 44-month uprising against Israeli rule in the occupied territories. Sixty-seven Israelis also died.

In Khan Yunis refugee camp in Gaza, three unknown assailants shot to death 41-year-old Daoud Abu Salik after breaking into his home, Arab reports said.

Arab reporters in Gaza said Mr. Abu Salik has been accused of assisting the Israeli authorities and has been attacked four times in the past.

The body of Jihad Hassounain, 26, was also found Sunday, the reports said. He was missing since Saturday when he was kidnapped by unknown people, they added.

defeat and failure," it added, and also denounced Mr. Arafat as a "deceitful opportunist."

The leaflet also suggested convening a Palestinian conference with representatives of the Palestinians in the occupied territories, so they could elect a new PLO leadership.

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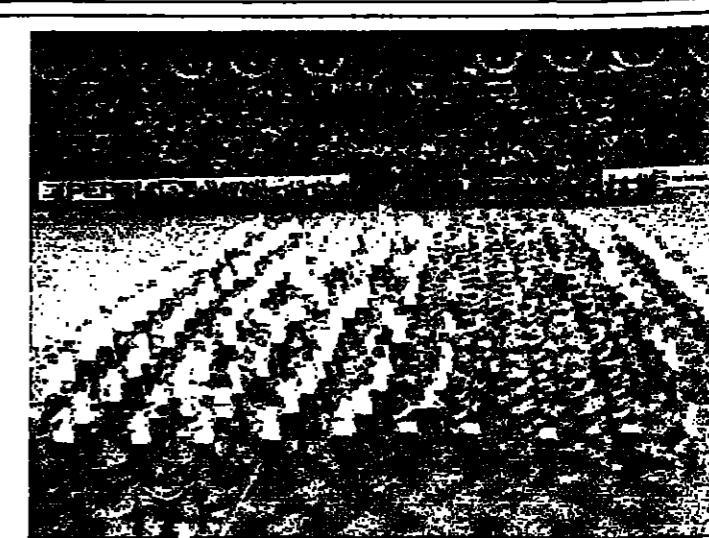
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ARMED FORCES FESTIVAL: His Majesty King Hussein Sunday attends a military festival held by the Armed Forces to mark the 39th anniversary of the King's accession to the Throne. The festival, which was held at Al Hussein Youth City Stadium, included military and sport performances. The festival was attended by Their Royal Highnesses Prince Abdullah and Prince Ali, Prince



Minister Taher Masri, the Speakers of the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament, the Royal Court chief, the King's political advisor, ministers, former prime ministers, the Armed Forces chief of staff, senators and deputies and senior army officers (Photos by Yousef Al'Allan)

Jordan pursues efforts to help stranded Gazans

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Jordanian government has stepped up efforts to convince Egypt to lift entry restrictions imposed on Gazans holding Egyptian documents stranded in Kuwait, informed sources said Sunday.

"Jordan is trying to get the Egyptian government to allow the Gazans to come to Egypt regardless of whether or not they have an entry permit to the (Israeli-occupied) Gaza Strip," said one source.

The source, who did not reveal the channels through which Amman was pushing its efforts, said the Kingdom's endeavours were complementary to contacts that are under way between the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and the Egyptian government.

Usually reliable sources said last month that Egyptian officials, in talks with senior PLO representatives, had promised to ease entry restrictions imposed on Gazans. But no decision has yet been reached, the same sources said Sunday.

Cairo is following a policy of granting 72-hour transit visas to Gazans with "Israeli permits" to enter the Gaza Strip, but putting others through a screening process which could take up to four weeks, and in many cases applications are turned down by the Egyptian Interior Ministry.

Sources familiar with the screening process said that those who can prove that they are financially sound enough to support themselves in Egypt with possibilities of stay in the country while others are turned down.

An Egyptian source said it was not true that the government had adopted a policy of "blanket refusal" to Gazans holding Egyptian documents. "Gazans who possess (Israeli-issued) entry permits to Gaza are automatically granted 72-hour transit visas to enter Egypt," said the source.

"Others are referred to Cairo for a process which does not take more than four weeks to be completed," added the source.

The source did not provide any figure for the rate of rejection of applications.

Cairo's argument says that Egypt cannot allow Gazans into its territory without guarantees that they are assured of Israeli permission to enter the Gaza Strip.

Expatriate sources said around 23,000 Gazans holding Egyptian travel documents remained in Kuwait with nowhere to go in the face of the Egyptian policy. No accurate estimate is available on the number of Gazans with Egyptian documents who passed through Jordan since the Iraqi

invasion.

"No country and no organisation will want to lead him down

Jordan has commuted five death sentences — Amnesty

By Nur Sati
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan has commuted death sentences passed on five prisoners convicted under martial law and has promised to review cases of other prisoners, senior officials of Amnesty International said Sunday.

Hannu Megally, head of the Middle East section of the London-based human rights organisation, and Claudio Coroneo, an Amnesty researcher, said they were informed of the government's decision during a meeting with Prime Minister Taher Masri on their current visit to Jordan.

Mr. Megally and Mr. Coroneo's visit comes as a follow-up on last year's visit Amnesty International Secretary-General Ian Martin.

Mr. Martin had met with officials of the Jordanian government to discuss Amnesty's concern about human rights in the country, Jordan's memorandum and proposals for government reform and recommendations.

"Since then," Mr. Megally told the Jordan Times, "we have noted that regulations governing martial law have been repealed and various laws are in the last stages of being drafted, in particular the defence law, state security court law, press law and the political parties law."

Amnesty International had objected to the new defence law as being too harsh. "Amnesty had recommended that safeguards be introduced into the defence law, particularly with regard to administrative detention," Mr. Megally recalled.

Amnesty hopes that the cases of all those tried by martial law courts will be solved without delay, he said, describing trial conducted under martial law as "unfair."

The identity of those reprieved from the gallows or the nature of the crimes they were convicted of was not immediately known and no official was available for comment.

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Amnesty also stresses the importance of access of the government to protect public

for prompt judicial review of it.

Since the arrival of the AI team, "we have been informed that the new state security court law will include the right of appeal for the court of cassation, which is in line with our recommendation," Mr. Megally said.

Mr. Megally and Mr. Coroneo also met with Minister of Interior Jawdat Shouli.

Mr. Shouli, in comments carried by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said that the delegation voiced satisfaction with the measures taken by the government concerning human rights and the government's keenness to provide a suitable atmosphere to bring the democratic experiment to a successful end.

One area that Amnesty remains concerned over is that the present safeguards "need to be considerably strengthened," said Mr. Megally, referring to detention and interrogation of suspects. "In particular," he said, "the organisation has been calling for strict access (within hours or days of arrest) to lawyers, families and medical examinations."

Amnesty also stresses the importance of access of the duration of detention and

(Continued on page 5)

Iran tightens pressure on Israel to break impasse over hostages

NICOSIA (AP) — Iran Sunday

stepped up pressure on Israel to free Muslim prisoners and end the impasse in complex negotiations to free Western hostages in Lebanon.

Iranian hostage negotiators said Sunday they do not expect an immediate breakthrough on the hostage issue despite a frenzy of diplomatic activity last week after an American and British hostage were freed.

"Nothing can happen overnight. This is a very complex problem," said Uri Lubrani, the defence ministry's adviser on Lebanon, who is heading Israel's efforts to secure a prisoner swap.

Weekend reports quoted U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar as saying he believed a solution could be negotiated within two weeks.

In an interview with the Associated Press, Mr. Lubrani said Israel's

Experts see potential for progress towards peace, but only over time

By Jocelyn Noveck
The Associated Press

IF THE UNITED States can find a way to resolve the Arab-Israeli dispute over Palestinian representation, the long-sought Middle East peace conference can finally begin.

Then comes the rough part.

In the early stages of the conference, prospects for real progress appear dim. Israel has given no sign it is willing to cede Arab land — the basic premise of the U.S. peace plan. Neither have the Arabs shown willingness to back down from their demand for their land.

Among a dozen analysts and former officials interviewed in the United States and the Middle East, however, there was a feeling that in the long run — perhaps years of hard bargaining — compromise was possible.

Progress is most likely between Israel and the Palestinians, some say, because the Palestinians are weaker politically than before the Gulf war and might be anxious to make a deal with Israel.

They note that, with the end of the cold war, Syria lost its traditional patron in the region — the Soviet Union — and President Hafez Al Assad could be more amenable to U.S. diplomacy.

All stress that a forceful U.S. role is crucial to progress. The United States, they say, must be involved in all phases of the talks, ready to flex its political and economic muscle and prod the sides into compromise.

Most analysts agree that, even if the initial talks yield no results, the mere fact of the sides coming together will be beneficial. Formidable psychological barriers will be broken, and the talks themselves could generate momentum.

"Negotiations don't just photograph positions, they change them," said Abba Eban, the Israeli statesman. "Once they begin, people are hesitant to break them off."

Palestinian professor Emile

Saliyah said: "At least the 'Berlin Wall' between the sides will have been broken."

Others fear positions could harden if the talks fail, giving new impetus to the Palestinian uprising in the Israeli-occupied territories and bringing the region closer to war.

Here are the views of five of those questioned:

— William Quandt, Middle East analyst at the Brookings Institution in Washington, predicts talks will bog down quickly over entrenched positions. Thus, the United States will have to remain actively involved to keep things moving, he said.

Mr. Quandt sees a better chance for movement on the Palestinian issue because the Palestinians want "to reverse a negative trend."

Possible interim solutions, he said, could include an Israeli offer on a demilitarised Gaza Strip, or an offer of elections in Palestinian municipalities in exchange for assurances of calm.

In the long term — possibly when the right-wing government of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir is no longer in power — he envisions a "confederal arrangement" involving Israel, the Palestinians and Jordan.

— Dr. Saliyah, a former professor at Birzeit University in the occupied West Bank, feels peace is possible in the long term under a more moderate Israeli government.

The first movement might be "confidence-building measures," Dr. Saliyah said. These would include Israel giving Palestinians more control over their communities.

He doubts the current Israeli government would trade land for peace. But later, he can foresee a transitional arrangement under which Israel would gradually start transferring authority to a Jordanian-Palestinian entity.

As for Syria, which wants the Golan Heights back, Dr. Saliyah sees a deal involving a demilitarised Golan. The same deal, he believes, could include a demilitarised southern Lebanon.

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— Mr. Eban, a former Israeli foreign minister, feels progress is more likely on the Palestinian issue because "things are going against them."

He envisioned an interim settlement along the lines of the 1978 Camp David accords, meaning an agreement on autonomy with the final status of the occupied territories to be determined later.

He said one scenario is that, if Mr. Shamir feels he is being pressured too much, he would break off the talks and call early elections, delaying any agreement.

If the talks failed, there would be despair, a growth of radicalism on both sides and more suppression of Palestinians in the occupied territories, Mr. Eban said.

Rami Khouri, a political analyst in Amman, does not expect progress from the face-to-face meetings between the sides, but "eventually we will have to move together."

Mr. Khouri said partial concessions by both sides could lead to a comprehensive settlement, "but a partial solution would not work."

Sitting down to talk is essential, he said, but "if there is no agreement, this will definitely lead to war."

— Gregory Gause, an American professor of Middle East studies at Columbia University, said the prospects for success are dim. He said Israel does not appear willing to change its policy, but is mainly going along with the conference to please Washington and be assured of continued aid.

The United States seems to think that, once people sit down, they'll come to some sort of an agreement," he said. "That's nonsensical."

Mr. Gause predicted the talks would eventually " peter out." Their failure might not lead to war, he said, but "could leave things worse than they were before."

Sheikh Obeid's wife appeals for his release

NICOSIA (AP) — The wife of Sheikh Abdul Karim Obeid has appealed to Iran and all international bodies to secure the release of her husband, the most important Shiite prisoner Shiite prisoner held by Israel, the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) said Sunday.

Sheikh Obeid, 33, a prominent Shiite cleric who was a top official of Hezbollah, in southern Lebanon, was kidnapped by airborne Israeli agents from his home in 1989 to be used as a bargaining chip for Israeli prisoners.

Hezbollah is believed to be the umbrella group for the groups holding most of the 11 remaining Western hostages. Sheikh Obeid's release from a prison in northern Israel has been demanded by the Western hostage holders.

IRNA, in a report monitored in Nicosia, said Sheikh Obeid's wife in a letter to the agency's office in Sidon, Lebanon, appealed to Iran and all international bodies to make efforts to secure the release of her husband and other Lebanese prisoners held by Israel.

Relatives of some of the other Arab prisoners staged a sit-in Friday in Beirut and sent an appeal to the United Nations



Israel is holding Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners who are expected to feature in a prisoner exchange deal involving Western hostages held in Lebanon. Some of the prisoners are held at an Israeli prison camp at Atil, south of Haifa, seen here.

missing in Lebanon. Mr. Lubrani told Israel Radio Saturday that until Israel got authoritative information on its missing service men there would be no movement on the hostage talks.

"We appreciate the fact that his family is of course anxious. Our families are anxious too and I think it is high time that all this misery and agony and anguish should be stopped," he said.

Israel is pressing for information on seven of its servicemen

missing in Lebanon. Mr. Lubrani told Israel Radio Saturday that until Israel got authoritative information on its missing service men there would be no movement on the hostage talks.

Both countries gained independence from Britain in 1971, and each has a fledgling naval force on barely a dozen units that include Exocet-equipped missile gunboats.

Aside from the terse July statement, Bahrain officials have declined public comment on the developments, but Gulf officials said that the Bahraini government officially protested the Aug. 3 incident.

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Both countries gained independence from Britain in 1971, and each has a fledgling naval force on barely a dozen units that include Exocet-equipped missile gunboats.

Aside from the terse July statement, Bahrain officials have declined public comment on the developments, but Gulf officials said that the Bahraini government officially protested the Aug. 3 incident.

"We appreciate the fact that his family is of course anxious. Our families are anxious too and I think it is high time that all this misery and agony and anguish should be stopped," he said.

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New law on press freedom to be sent to Parliament

By Omar Al Omari

AMMAN — The new law on press and publications which the government is to submit to Parliament for approval is not a mere amendment to the old law but rather a new law that takes into account the democratic transformations in the Kingdom and the National Charter, according to Minister of Information and Culture Khaled Karaki.

The new draft law has been thoroughly studied by advisors working for the government who also enlisted the views of many experienced specialists serving in the fields of the press and publishing houses as well as writers, Dr. Karaki said in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Sunday.

He said the new law guarantees freedom of printing, freedom of expression in any form including writings and drawings and freedom of the press to provide the public with news, commentary and material related to science and culture. The law guarantees public freedom and rights for all, the minister said.

He said that the new draft law ensures the right for access to information and news which would be presented to members of the public who will be allowed to publish their views in freedom.

The new law guarantees the right of newspaper editors and journalists to keep confidential and secret sources of information and news. It also grants political parties, cultural, social and professional institutions the right to free expression and to publish their activities and achievements.

Dr. Karaki said that the new law, however, reaffirms certain basic principles related to the media like being objective and accurate in reporting and refraining from publishing anything that might stir violence or deepen hatreds or create tendencies towards sectarianism and racism.

Malaysian experts stress nutritional value of palm oil products in seminar

By Ida Webb
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A three-member Malaysian delegation currently on a visit to Jordan, held a seminar Saturday on the origin of palm oil, its uses and its nutritional value in an effort to promote awareness of the product.

The visit to Jordan is part of a tour of palm oil importing countries by experts from the Malaysian Palm Oil Institute. The visits are conducted on an annual basis to update importers' knowledge and pass technical and scientific information on palm oil.

Malaysia is the biggest producer and exporter of palm oil. Oil palm accounts for nearly a third of the country's cultivated area. The country supplies 57.2 per cent of the world's palm oil production.

Jordan, which has a 6.92 kilogramme per capita consumption of palm oil, is one of the Middle East countries that imports Malaysian oil. The region imports 1.68 million tonnes of palm oil, accounting for 25 per cent of the total Malaysian production.

According to experts at the seminar, the palm tree bears about 10 to 12 fruit bunches a year and is never without fruit from the time it starts producing, when the tree is three years old, to the time it ceases to be economically productive, about 22 years later.

Oil is extracted from the pulp of the fruit, the mesocarp, and from the kernel. Both parts are made up of 50 per cent oil.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed date and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

★ Exhibition of traditional embroideries and hand-made items at the Jordan Intercontinental Hotel.

★ Exhibition of paintings depicting the Jordanian environment by artist Sharaf Al Jumali at the Royal Cultural Centre.

SYMPOSIUM

★ Symposium entitled "Gorbachevism — Revolution or Counter-Revolution" at Abdulla Hamed Shoman's Cultural and Scientific Centre — 6:30 p.m.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan and Justice Minister Tayseer Kanaan with the first batch of students from the Judicial Institute (Photo by Yousef Al 'Allan)

Prince Hassan cites role of judiciary in Jordan

AMMAN (Petra) — Deputising for His Majesty King Hussein, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Sunday attended the graduation of the first batch of students from the Jordanian Judicial Institute.

Addressing the graduation ceremony, Prince Hassan voiced the King's utmost care for the independence of the judicial system and its integrity, in accordance with Article 30 of the Jordanian Constitution, which placed the judiciary branch above two Executive and Legislative branches.

The Crown Prince said that the independence of the judiciary does not mean its isolation from Jordanian society. He hoped that the judiciary will look into all means for advancing the profession and to reach at objective and independent approach characterised by integrity and justice, he

said.

Prince Hassan named three elements which he said were necessary for strengthening the judiciary. These elements are:

— obtaining a higher academic degree in an area of specialisation

and benefiting from all modern legal theories that are capable of enriching the law profession in our country.

— documenting and keeping all decisions taken by the Jordanian judiciary, particularly the decisions passed by the Higher Judicial bodies because analytical documentation of such decisions benefit the continuity of work,

— and preparation of a perception of the judiciary establish-

ment.

Also addressing the graduation ceremony was Justice Minister Tayseer Kanaan, who voiced his gratitude for the King for the care His Majesty gives to the judicial

system.

"This care is a dear certificate which every member in the judicial system boasts of. It also serves as an incentive for dedicated work and for the smooth administration of justice," Mr. Kanaan said.

The judicial institute has been established upon the directives of His Majesty King Hussein to prepare qualified cadres in the judicial field.

At the end of the ceremony, Prince Hassan presented the certificates to the graduates and received the institute's trophy.

The graduation ceremony was attended by the Speakers of the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament, a number of cabinet ministers, members of the Jordan Bar Association's board, judges and members of the Board of the Judicial Institute.

Farmers in Jordan Valley to be compensated for loss of crops

DEIR ALLA (J.T.) — Farmers whose crops were severely damaged in the last agricultural season due to the use of polluted water from the King Talal Dam will receive compensation from the government at the rate of JD 8 per dunum, Minister of Water and Irrigation Samir Kawar announced Sunday.

Total American assistance to Jordan for fiscal 1990 was close to \$270 million, including grains and military aid. Part of the assistance was allocated against "debts unpaid." A similar level of assistance was expected for 1991 but the Gulf crisis, which led to the strain in American-Jordanian relations, preempted it. In fact, the original earmark for aid to the Kingdom for 1991 was \$85 million, including military aid. This was reduced to \$55 million late last year by Congress.

The administration had earmarked \$31 million in assistance to Jordan for fiscal year 1991 (October 1990 to September 1991), but the allocation was removed under the congressional order, leaving the amount of possible allocation to Jordan subject to further consultations with Congress.

The high end of consultations with the Congress is \$31 million but we don't know how much will be the actual amount," Mr. Oliver said. The allocation has to be made before Sept. 30, the end of fiscal year 1991.

The United States is also providing about 240,000 tonnes of feed grain for poultry and livestock worth \$27 million to Jordan under an agreement signed in July. This assistance is not covered by the restraint imposed by Congress since it is channelled through the Department of Agriculture and not USAID.

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Fresh requests for aid to Jordan will be presented to Congress in October for fiscal year 1992 and Mr. Oliver expressed confidence that the congressional decision will be favourable.

Mr. Oliver said he would only discuss economic assistance and referred all questions related to military aid to the American embassy.

Under the 1991 earmark, military assistance was expected to be \$20 million. An American embassy spokesman said he expected that amount to be restored.

The Congress is scheduled to end its summer recess later this month.

U.S. funding of Jordanian projects to be resumed

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The green light has been given for the resumption of spending on programmes in Jordan financed by the United States after the Bush administration provided certification to Congress to unfreeze aid suspended since April, U.S. officials said Sunday.

"There was an amount of \$57 million which was in the pipeline that was frozen in April and now this has been unfrozen," said Tom Oliver, director of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Amman.

The clearance came after President George Bush certified to Congress on July 23 Jordan's "helpfulness" in the American-led Middle East peace process, Mr. Oliver said. The aid was suspended by Congress in an expression of Washington's displeasure with Jordan's refusal to join the U.S.-led anti-Iraq coalition in the Gulf crisis.

American officials said early this month that President Bush had sent the necessary legislation to Congress to unfreeze financial assistance to Jordan. But, they added, no new funds have been committed and military aid programmes are still under review.

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Swiss government considering forgiving part of loan to Jordan

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Swiss government has decided to consider part of its 60-million-Swiss franc loan to Jordan as a grant in a bid to help the Kingdom overcome part of its external debt burden, according to a statement by Ministry of Planning Secretary General Sawsan Touqan.

Switzerland is now considering changing a sum of 20 million Swiss francs (about JD 9 million), its share in the loan, to a grant to Jordan but the rest of that loan would have to be settled with the creditors — a consortium of Swiss banks, Dr. Touqan said.

The Council of Ministers here had approved an amendment to this agreement which was originally signed last June. The council also authorised the minister of

planning to formally sign the amendment to the agreement on behalf of the Jordanian government, Dr. Touqan said.

Switzerland is one of a number of European countries which offered Jordan loans and grants in the wake of the Gulf crisis to ease the pressure on the Kingdom's national economy, which was severely affected by the crisis.

In another development, Dr. Touqan announced that he had reached agreement with the Soviet government to hold a joint Jordanian-Soviet meeting in Amman in the coming month to review the implementation of the cultural programme for the coming two years.

Jordan attaches great importance to the implementation of the programme, which is designed to launch cooperation in science, higher education, culture, information, archaeology, youth, health and vocational training, he said.

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On circles and bottlenecks

GRANTED THAT the exodus of Iraqis and Jordanians and Palestinian expatriates into Jordan over the past several months has contributed to the unusually heavy traffic jams being witnessed in Amman and some other Jordanian cities these days. But the truth is that the real source of our traffic problems lie more with the way our people drive and the design and planning of the roads their cars have to negotiate in order to get there. Take for example the decision to block two small but vital intersections on the main Jabal Amman thoroughfare, specifically between the Fifth and Sixth circles and the Sixth and Seventh circles. Ostensibly the verdict to close these connecting points with the other side of the Jabal Amman area was to speed up the flow of traffic and avoid its obstruction by periodic turns to the left or right of that congested part of the capital. Yet what ensued from that unfortunate step is exactly the opposite because by confining the "turning points" to two main intersections several bottlenecks were unnecessarily created. As all vehicles are forced to continue their drives till the "bitter end of the road," namely Fifth and Sixth circle traffic lights, in order to turn into Um Uthaina and Swaifeh, the inevitable mayhem erupts at exactly those two points. The same applies to Gardens Street and Jordan University Road, among many others, where drivers are obliged to go many extra and unnecessary kilometres in order to be able to turn to where they want to go in the first place. Instead of these troublesome traffic jams caused by the artificially created bottlenecks, it would have been saner and less costly in terms of time and gasoline costs for the concerned authorities to have maintained a sufficient number of cut-offs and intersections on the principal streets. The only price that drivers would have had to pay for keeping the original solution is the control of their speed, which is a maximum of 60 km/hr inside towns anyway. In actual terms such control in the speed of automobiles on the affected streets would not be so much as to justify traffic bottlenecks in so many arteries of Amman.

Of course there are many other traffic problems that the urban areas of our country continue to suffer from. On so many occasions the matter of maintaining well-defined lanes was raised again and again without any solution in sight. It so happens that well-marked lanes contribute to driving discipline that Jordanians so desperately need to learn once and for all. The process to draw up distinct recognisable traffic lanes is not such an expensive venture that our traffic authorities or the Amman municipality cannot afford it. The economic costs of keeping our streets in such disorderly shape, not to mention its human costs, outweigh any economic factors pertaining to having street lanes and Stop sign markings. The trouble with traffic intersections as with traffic lanes and Stop signs which still no one pays any attention to lies in fact that no-one in the concerned authorities is paying attention to what the people of Jordan have been constantly warning against. If the national dialogue on such pressing issues continues to be a dialogue between the deaf, then there is no point in pursuing this matter any longer. Hopefully this time around, when the streets of Amman are so heavily congested, someone out there will listen and take note of what the people of Jordan need and desire.

When a former mayor of Amman was asked not too long ago why he would not entertain the idea of building an artificial lake in Amman, his answer was simple. "I do not want to be responsible for anybody drowning in it," he said. Well, do our traffic officials want the responsibility for the loss of hundreds of lives in traffic accidents every year simply because they cannot do a good job in their field of work?

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

IN HIS interview with Viasnews television network a few days ago His Majesty King Hussein called for a united Arab stand and concerted efforts on the part of Arab states in direct confrontation with Israel before the peace conference can convene in October, Al Ra'i daily said Sunday. It said that Jordan is keen on unifying the Arab parties' stand with regard to this important conference not because it cannot stand by itself, but rather because it is keen on achieving a united Arab stand that can be of real weight at the coming conference which is supposed to discuss issues of common concern to all Arabs, the paper noted. Any further delay in uniting Arab countries' stand is bound to weaken the Arab position, said the paper. The paper noted that Israeli and American teams of officials and experts have been working hard in hand for a long time in order to coordinate their views at the coming conference at a time when the Arabs are in disarray and failing to achieve the minimum level of coordination. The paper said that Israel is skillful in falsifying facts and distorting situations, and unless the Arabs are up to that challenge, they would soon be deceived.

AL Dustour daily tackled the plight of the Jordanian-Palestinian community in Kuwait and said that Western countries are tightening and turning a blind eye to the atrocities committed against this community by the Kuwaiti authorities. The Western countries' silence about such atrocities is tantamount to condoning such actions and such atrocities and is considered as an outright support for the Kuwaiti crimes against Palestinian and Jordanian civilians, the paper noted. We are blaming the Western countries because they had been bragging about human rights, had launched a war against Iraq under that pretext and have been claiming to uphold international law and implement international legitimacy, the paper added. The leaders of the Kuwaiti regime seem to have closed their ears to calls from Arab brothers urging them to stop the inhuman treatment of Jordanian and Palestinian expatriates simply because they are backed by the military forces of the U.S.-led alliance, the paper continued. We are indeed saddened to see Arab countries failing to do anything to halt the atrocities but we are also appalled by the attitude of the Western countries and their failure to uphold human rights and international principles in the case of the oppressed expatriates driven out from Kuwait.

Weekly Political Pulse

Iraqis only can choose and shape their destiny

THE kind of punitive measures being applied against Iraq must have as their aim either the overthrow of the Saddam Hussein regime or the destruction and mutilation of the Iraqi nation or both. How else can one explain the string of United Nations Security Council resolutions being adopted on Baghdad which in their cumulative effect appear to aim for the dismantling of the Iraqi nation and rendering it impotent and subservient for as long as one can see?

Against this seemingly international plot against part of the Arab World, the Arabs appear ominously silent. Recently, however, Cairo began to change its stance on the basically Western determination to liquidate Iraq by noticing Washington, and other capitals supportive of the U.S. master plan, that the Egyptian people will not support any more military strikes against Iraq, under any pretext, since such military offensives would be viewed by the Egyptian people as a bellicose effort to destroy an Arab country.

If this new Egyptian logic is pursued a little further and extended to its logical conclusion one would likewise conclude that the economic blockade on Iraq is a great threat against the well-being of an important part of the Arab World and therefore must be foiled and aborted.

Undoubtedly, Cairo's voice against the continuation of measures against Iraq and its people is not being effectively echoed by other Arab capitals, with the exception of Amman, as far as one can detect. Had the silent Arab capitals joined the meek chorus against the disfiguration of Iraq and the dispersion of its people,

there might have been some hope that Iraq and its people could still be saved from the terrible fate they have faced already.

As for the rest of the country of nations, there is no hope whatsoever that they may succeed in arresting the campaign against the Iraqi leadership and its people as long as the permanent members of the U.N. Security Council view their collective interests as better served by aiding and abetting such a campaign.

Against this backdrop, the Iraqi leadership has two options: either to stay firm against the relentless efforts to bring it down or to give way to other forces that have a chance to soften the blows against their country.

Rightly or wrongly, whenever a country is defeated as badly as Iraq was, the leadership immediately changes in order to better absorb the shock and effects of such a defeat.

If one may draw a parallel between the defeat of Germany and Japan in the World War II and the defeat of Iraq, then the natural thing to anticipate in the Iraqi situation is a change of leadership. Obviously such a decision in Iraq cannot be taken lightly or with impunity. Only the Iraqi people have the right to exercise such a prerogative to determine its future by a national plebiscite democratically conducted. After all, the people of Iraq are and should be the final arbiters of such a national course in the wake of the defeat of their country in the Gulf war.

Surely the Iraqi people would weigh their decision with utmost responsibility and take into consideration the events and circumstances that have led to the defeat of their armed forces.

In the Arab World, there are some precedents for such a course of action to take in the aftermath of a defeat of the magnitude Iraq has sustained.

The late Egyptian leader, Gamal Abdul Nasser, took that course when his country was defeated in the 1967 war with Israel, albeit the decision to refer the leadership issue to the Egyptian people did not take the formal route of a referendum.

Accordingly, the sooner the Iraqi people are given such a right and the sooner the Iraqi leadership takes this road for national salvation the better is for all sides.

As the Iraqi government is now keener than ever to introduce parliamentary democracy, such political developments on the domestic scene would provide the kind of opportunity for Iraq and its people to determine its future. As things stand now, there is a grave risk that Iraq would continue to be dead and its people dispersed across the Middle East and beyond.

If this is in essence the purpose of the Washington-London axis, then Iraq and its people must endeavour to preempt such a plan by taking the kind of remedial actions that could succeed in pulling the rug from under the feet of their enemies.

If the Iraqis choose to keep their leaders and renew their confidence in them, then the enemies of Iraq will have to take note of this solemn decision and give up their vicious attack on it. But as long as the Iraqi people are denied the opportunity to voice their support for their leadership then the enemies of Iraq would continue to entertain illusions about their ability to destroy Iraq.

By Waleed Sadi

M. Kahil



Beware Bush's 'new look'

By Moshe Zak

specifically, Henry A. Kissinger."

PRESIDENT George Bush did not ask Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir to make a gesture toward the Islamic Jihad, as did British Premier John Major. Had he done so, he would have received a polite, reasoned reply, like that sent to Mr. Major, saying that Israel couldn't play games with gestures while ignoring its seven PoWs and MIAs in Lebanon.

This consistent stand, however, showed a crack at the beginning of the week when Mr. Bush made some remarks on the subject of the hostages in Lebanon. His words could be interpreted by the Islamic Jihad to mean it had won the president's understanding of their demands for an Israeli gesture as a condition for letting Western hostages in Beirut go free. In the course of the week, the administration was forced to work hard to clarify that the U.S. would not press Israel and would not try to squeeze from it a gesture in favour of the Islamic Jihad.

Some 10 months ago, Iran asked the Swiss government to mediate between it and Israel concerning the freeing of Shiite prisoners in South Lebanon; Switzerland proposed that Israel take the first step as a gesture for freeing prisoners, to advance the release of Western hostages and Israeli PoWs, and MIAs in Lebanon. Israel responded to the Swiss recommendation and freed 40 Shiite prisoners.

But that gesture remained unanswered. The U.S. was privy to this negotiation, so Mr. Bush made a grave factual error in crediting the American agreement with Syrian President Hafez Al Assad concerning a regional peace conference for the Islamic Jihad proposal to free American hostages in return for pressure on Israel (the organization works under Iranian guidance in Syrian-controlled territory).

From Israel's viewpoint, the Islamic Jihad's message to the U.N. secretary general poses a worse condition than the approach through Switzerland: for at that time, October 1990, the negotiation was conducted from the outset over the inclusion of Israeli prisoners and MIAs in the deal. Only in April this year did the Iranian foreign minister change the terms by announcing at a news conference in Tehran that his country would be ready

to cooperate in freeing hostages in Lebanon if the U.S. pressed Israel to release Sheikh Obaid and other Muslims held by it.

At his vacation home, Mr. Bush was not fully briefed with all the facts; had he been informed of the content of the Islamic Jihad note, he would have taken care not to voice that unfortunate remark about the deep concern by the captors of the hostages regarding the Palestinian problem.

Had he read the document, he would have been careful not to praise what it said:

"If struggle, jihad, and resistance against the superpowers is terrorism, we and the oppressed peoples throughout the world are proud to be terrorists, combating injustice and striking terror into the hearts of the enemies of God and Mankind, as long as they interfere in the internal affairs of oppressed nations and peoples anywhere in the world."

And if Mr. Bush had gone on to read the next sentence, he would have seen:

"The U.N. should endeavour to put an end to the hegemony of the superpowers over its resolutions and activities, and one of its first tasks should be to abolish the iniquitous right of veto, which is rightly regarded as worse than the law of the jungle."

Acknowledged, he would have refrained from congratulating the Iranian government for its part in freeing Western hostages, since it is clear to everyone that this statement was not written in Beirut, but dictated by the Iranian Foreign Ministry: it has launched a campaign to abolish the big powers' veto in the U.N. Security Council — something which is not the concern of the "Oppressed of the World" in Beirut.

It is doubtful that Mr. Bush would have recommended listening sympathetically to the words of the Beirut kidnappers to their captives had he first read this segment of their note to the U.N. secretary general:

"We appeal to you, in your capacity as secretary general of the U.N., and to the world as a whole, to adopt Islam as an ideology, a code of law, and a system to follow the teachings of the great Imam (Ayatollah) Khomeini, who expounded the principles and conventions on

which peoples, movements and regimes must base their endeavours to achieve progress, to solve the problems with which they are burdened, and to achieve happiness and well-being."

It may be assumed that he would even have been careful not to comment their remarks on the Palestinian issue: most of the hostages grabbed in Lebanon a priori firmly espoused a pro-Arab line; they did not need the lectures they got.

The hostage David Jacobson of the American University of Beirut justified his views, after being freed, by saying that what he had been videotaped as saying against President Ronald Reagan and Israel was said "under duress."

In contrast, the American missionary Benjamin Weir stayed faithful to the anti-Israel, pro-Palestinian line he preached during 32 years in Lebanon. On his return to Washington, he called on the U.S. administration to change its policy toward Israel, which he harshly attacked — though he knew he had been freed thanks to Israeli intervention in Tehran!

Then-president Reagan sent a note of thanks to Israel for that and his vice-president, Mr. Bush heard during his visit to Jerusalem of the Iranian instructions broadcast from Tehran to the terrorists in Lebanon.

On the surface, no excessive importance need be attributed to Mr. Bush's casual comment (while playing golf during his vacation); the more so after his subsequent public explanation that the U.S. would not negotiate a deal with terrorists and would not press Israel to make a unilateral gesture.

However, in practice, a remark like that reveals his latent thoughts on the Middle East: they could be symptomatic of the forging of the "New Look" in Washington — a look according to Syria for the Israeli-Syrian relations with a stronger emphasis on the Palestinian cause, and preserving distance in political coordination with Israel.

The development of such a "New Look," for which the regional conference will serve as the anvil, is bound to worry Israel — The Jerusalem Post.

"Another such constant is the determination of Syria's President Hafez Al Assad — whose wooing of the West has come to fruition with his historic concessions in the Arab-Israeli peace process — to shed a reputation for terrorism every bit as well-earned as Mr. Rafsanjani's once was, and to prove that he can bring peace to Lebanon where everyone else has failed.

Syria cannot claim as much influence over the fundamentalist Hezbollah movement and its hostage-taking subgroups, but, if only through the sheer weight and scope of its influence over at least a segment of them. Often in the past it has used it, with the lucky captive's furtive handover to Syria intelligence in a West Beirut street, followed by a pre-arranged press conference in Damascus, to achieve maximum credit for it.

The hostage-takers themselves must feel very tempted to strike as favourable a deal as they can, before they lose even more of their diminishing bargaining power with their former sponsors or accomplices.

Their demands, as they have emerged in recent months, have been reduced to the release of up to 500 Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails, including Sheikh Abd al-Karim Obeid, the fundamentalist cleric whom the Israelis abducted from deep inside Lebanon. The deal interests almost all is conjecture in this unpredictable field, but it could well be that, with the Iranian pragmatists pushing so hard, the chances of a happy ending are better than ever. — The Guar-

The radicals are outraged at the historic concessions which the Arabs have made on behalf of Pax Americana in the Middle East: they are particularly angry that Syria, traditionally Iran's closest Arab ally, should be showing the way. That is an embarrassment to Mr. Rafsanjani too; he recently sent his foreign minister to seek "clear explanations" from Damascus.

Habitually, the Iranians — rather like the Israelis — are all too willing to exploit their influence in Lebanon for wider strategic purposes. At the moment, their Hezbollah protégés are playing the spoiler's role, refusing to dissolve their militia — as the Palestinians are doing — under the aegis of Pax Syria, and owing to pursue the armed struggle against Israel to the end.

For Mr. Rafsanjani, fundamentalist militancy in Lebanon, insofar as he is still encouraging it, might simply be an instrument for extracting greater recognition for Iran's place in a new, American-dominated, Middle Eastern order; for his radical rivals it could be the base of a deadly serious campaign, against him as well as against "the Great Satan."

The last time, in June, that the Tehran Times forecast an imminent hostage release, the eminence grise of the radicals, the former interior minister Ali Akbar Mohandes, told a rival Tehran newspaper that this would be a "two-edged weapon." If it involved any deviation from "legitimate" Islamic demands, he warned darkly, it would "definitely lead to internal (Iranian?) and external explosions."

Who, one wonders, is the Organisation for the Defence of Prisoners' Rights, which threw a grenade last night near U.N. offices in West Beirut, urging the U.N. Secretary-General, "the godfather of this deal, not to get involved in suspicious acts that serve the interests of American intelligence agencies and the Israeli Mossad?"

Almost all is conjecture in this unpredictable field, but it could well be that, with the Iranian pragmatists pushing so hard, the chances of a happy ending are better than ever. — The Guar-

Jordan commuted sentences

(Continued from page 1)

decided to judges to assess the legality of their detention and treatment.

According to Mr. Cordone, all-those safeguards are included in the United Nations Convention against Torture. Jordan has decided to ratify this treaty, as well as the optional protocol to the International Convention of Civil and Political Rights.

"Amnesty's definition of an ideal country in terms of respect of human rights is based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international standards. "We call on all governments to ratify these and to adapt local and national laws in line with the international treaties," Mr. Megally said.

Specifically, Amnesty works for the release of all people imprisoned because of political or religious views or ethnic or racial discrimination, of who have not used or advocated violence, one of those who are termed prisoners of conscience. "We ask for the repeal of any legislation that allows such individuals to be imprisoned," Mr. Megally explained.

Amnesty also works for fair, prompt trial for all political prisoners. "We are against torture and death penalty in all cases," he said.

"In that sense, any government that follows these principles is close to an ideal country that we seek," Mr. Megally said.

Asked how Amnesty assessed Jordan's records and performance when compared to other countries of the region, Mr. Megally said that the organisation tries not to make such comparisons. "We try not to compare countries and not to

have a league table of countries in terms of human rights records," he said. Each country has its own social, economic and political context as violations and "each country differs greatly in terms of types and intensity," he said. However, "we welcome any improvements in human rights situations."

On a different level, Mr. Megally said that Amnesty is "very concerned about the situation of Palestinians, Jordanians and other nationals returning from Kuwait."

"We have called on Kuwaiti authorities not to expel anyone (from Kuwait)," he added. Amnesty has also called on authorities not to execute any of the prisoners recently convicted or sentenced to death.

"Amnesty is pleased that those sentences are now commuted, but it has expressed concern about trials that have already taken place, particularly over allegations of torture, pre-trial detention and lack of appeal following detention."

The two delegates will report back to the secretary general (of Amnesty International, in London and seek to continue the "constructive dialogue" and the open access to Jordan that we have today," Mr. Megally said. "Where it is appropriate, we will make further recommendations to the government in the spirit of the improvements that are taking place presently," Mr. Megally said.

The Amnesty experts voiced satisfaction over the importance Jordan has given to the respect of human rights in the National Charter. "We hope that positive steps are taken by Jordan that will encourage improvement of human rights throughout the region," Mr. Megally said.

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Syria, Egypt accept Arab talks

(Continued from page 1)

Israeli withdrawal from all Arab territories occupied in the 1967 war — including Jerusalem — the right of the Palestinian people to return to their homeland and international legitimacy.

Mr. Najaib also said that the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, which is based in the occupied Gaza Strip, has rejected participating in a meeting of the Palestine National Council (PNC), expected to be convened in Algiers on Sept. 15.

"We contacted the Hamas leadership and invited them to a preparatory meeting for the PNC session, but they refused," Mr. Najaib said.

His Majesty King Hussein said recently that he planned to visit Damascus soon for talks with Syrian President Hafez Al Assad.

The 450-member PNC will elect a new seventh council, which includes the presidency, the Executive Committee and representatives from PLO factions.

Hamas had demanded a quota for its representation in the PNC, but Mr. Najaib would not comment whether the PLO rejected Hamas' proposals.

"There will be independent representatives from those in the diaspora and new faces in the Palestinian organisation (in the upcoming elections)," Mr. Najaib said.

He added that the PNC meeting "would either support or reject the plan towards the peace conference."

He said that the majority of the PLO and PNC members supported a general peace process "based on international legitimacy."

Foreign Minister David Levy. "Levy expressed the Israeli government's position that the issue could not be resolved except as part of an overall answer to the Arab-Israeli conflict," said one source. "However, he promised to study the matter further and get back to Musa," the source added.

In the meantime, the Algerian and Libyan governments are offering employment to Palestinian expatriates, official sources said. "But the offers are limited to skilled workers such as teachers, engineers etc.," said one official.

Advertisements have appeared in the local press inviting applications through the PLO for employment in Algeria and Libya.

U.S. President George Bush Sunday credited Iran with playing a more constructive role in the United Nations in negotiating terms for the release of remaining Western hostages in Lebanon.

Asked about their impressions of conditions in Iraq, Dr. Bolling replied: "We were in Iraq too short a time to have more than a limited set of superficial views. However, we visited several hospitals in Baghdad and in provincial towns, we talked at length with government officers and with representatives of several international NGOs actively engaged in humanitarian assistance projects.

We saw a number of shocking cases of severely mal-nourished small children, he continued. "We all agreed that the issues of adequate supplies of baby milk

and certain medicines must be addressed in a more urgent manner by both the world community and the government of Iraq."

"Speaking personally, my own feeling was that the sanctions on food and medical supplies should be lifted totally and immediately and that Iraq should have access to its financial resources to purchase those supplies in world markets," Dr. Bolling said. "The United States and the United Nations should adjust their policies accordingly. Meanwhile, it seemed to me that the Iraqi government could do more by whatever means necessary to get baby milk formula to all infants who need it.

There is widespread smuggling of all kinds of commodities into Iraq across virtually all borders, despite the sanctions, including Lebanese beer, cigarettes, etc. etc.

One has to wonder if determined efforts might not make more baby milk available without waiting for sanctions to be ended," he concluded.

Government takes steps to help returnees

AMMAN (J.T.) — The newly-established Returnees Welfare Committee met Sunday under the chairmanship of Salameh Hammam, who is also the secretary general of the Interior Ministry, and discussed the information and statistics collected about Jordanian and Palestinian citizens who have returned to Jordan after losing their jobs in Kuwait and other Gulf states.

Mr. Hammam also met with the British chargé d'affaires in Amman and discussed with him scopes of assistance to the returnees.

The Returnees Welfare Committee has recently been created upon directives from His Majesty King Hussein to provide the necessary facilities for the returnees.

In implementation of the Royal directives, the Customs Department Sunday issued a circular to all customs directors to exempt from customs duties personal luggage and effects accompanying Jordanians coming from Kuwait for permanent residence in Jordan, provided that the returnees produce a document proving that they were living abroad.

Elaborating on the new customs facilities, the director general, Mahdi Farhan, said new instructions had been given to all customs officers requesting that they facilitate the entry of the returnees luggage into the country.

The instructions gave customs

officials the authority to grant exemptions in accordance with the provisions set out by the circular issued Sunday, without referring to the Customs Department. The new instructions allow for more flexibility in checking incoming luggage accompanying returnees.

Customs officials can only check a specific number of items against the Customs Clearance Declaration rather than checking all the items. The instructions also gave priority to furniture over other items.

The circular provided for exemption from customs duties all household utensils, electric equipment and carpets accompanying returnees, provided that such equipment are designed solely for use by the families concerned. The instructions also gave customs officials or their deputies the authority to determine the consumption rate. However, if any dispute arises about this rate, it should be settled in favour of the returnee.

Under the new instructions, the beneficiaries from the customs exemptions must present a written statement that neither they nor any of their family members were granted exemption for their furniture over the last two years. They will also have to pay customs duties and taxes on such furniture if it has been established that such items were granted exemption during the previous two years.

We will take the students' word concerning the classes they were in," the ministry's secretary general said.

However, the ministry's director general of education, Dr. Khaled Al Sheikh said in an interview with the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that students would be given a period of six weeks to bring in their documents. "In case it is impossible for a student to bring these documents, he or she will have to sit for a test to assess his level, and the student will be accepted in the right class," Dr. Sheikh said.

Amman area health centres overburdened

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Health Ministry is intensifying efforts to provide medical services to the public through its health centres in Amman and other areas in light of the growing demand on such services by the large community of Jordanian and Palestinian expatriates, according to Zeid Al Kayed, director of the ministry's Health Department in the Amman region.

Health centres and hospitals are witnessing a huge influx of patients, many of them expatriates returning from Kuwait and the ministry is doing all it can to cope with the situation, Dr. Kayed said in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

The health department in the capital has made arrangements to deal with the extra workload and the health centres in the Amman Governorate have been supplied with additional quantities of medicine and medical equipment to deal with the situation, Dr. Kayed said.

Expatriates, like the rest of the public, are being offered vaccination, laboratory tests and general health services, Dr. Kayed said. According to the Ministry of

ter alia, abandoning plans to leave rented schools, increasing the number of students in all sections from 35 and 40 to 50 per class, restoring the two shift school system and recruitment of about 500 teachers.

Dr. Masri pointed out that costs involved would be around JD 8 to 10 million. He added that there were no problems in admitting students, even if they don't have documents.

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Health, comprehensive health centres in Jordan provide primary health care services, care for mothers and children and dentistry and X-ray services.

Government sources estimate the number of Jordanian and Palestinian expatriates in Jordan at 350,000 plus nearly 100,000 Iraqis who have converged on Amman after the Gulf crisis and in the ongoing Kuwaiti move to expel expatriates.

Last month, Minister of Water and Irrigation Samir Kawar said that drinking water shortages in certain areas of the Kingdom were caused by the return to Jordan of large numbers of expatriates.

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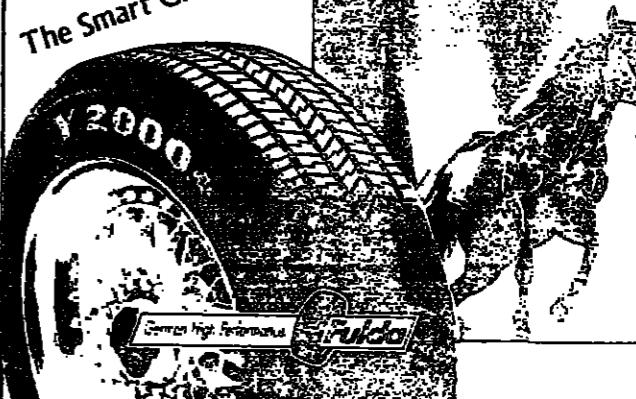
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Sports

U.S. takes 6 golds to pass

Cuba in Pan Am medal race

HAVANA (AP) — Six golds in swimming raised American spirits after the basketball and baseball teams sank into the bronze age.

But they aren't likely to prevent the first U.S. loss in total golds at the Pan American Games in 40 years.

Not since the first games in 1951, when the United States sent teams in only 15 of 21 sports and trailed host Argentina, have the Americans lost the gold race.

That prospect is now almost certain as Cuba heads into the final day one gold behind, 124-123. The Americans lead the overall chart 333 to 244. Cuba is heavily favoured to win most, if not all, of its 11 fights for gold in boxing — plus a batch of other golds.

"We've all been thinking about the medals," said Andrew Gill, who won the 100-metre backstroke. "Every time we walk through the athletes village, people remind us. Tonight helped even things up some."

The swimmers will seek another six-race sweep Sunday, the final day of competition.

Jane Skillman won her third gold, taking the 800 freestyle in 8:43.26, just ahead of teammate Lisa Jacob. Americans also were 1-2 in the men's 50 freestyle, where Todd Pace edged Adam Schmitt, 22.60 seconds to 22.61.

The U.S. women's 400 medley relay team set a Pan Am record as Jodi Wilson, Dorsey Tierney, Angie Wester-Krieg and Ashley

Tappin clocked 4:12.51. Tierney and Tappin each collected their third gold.

Mark Dean won the 200 butterfly, Lisa Summers took the 200 individual medley, and Gill edged Rodolfo Falcon of Cuba in the 100m butterfly.

Dean, still coming back from lung surgery in June 1990, beat 1988 Olympic gold medalist Anthony Nesty of Surinam by nearly two seconds with a time of 20.11.

Cuba won the baseball gold, as expected, with another rout, as expected. The Cubans pounded Puerto Rico 18-3, giving them 131 runs in nine games.

Unbeaten Cuba hit seven homers, including three by Eremielio Urrutia, who went 6-for-6 and pounded out 23 hits.

Chris Roberts singled to drive in Jeff Hammonds, who had led off the 15th inning with a double, as the United States outlasted the Dominican Republic 2-1 for the bronze medal in baseball.

Roberts' one-out hit broke an 0-for-9 slump, including 0-for-6 Saturday.

"We were all tired and we wanted to get home with the victory," Hammonds said. "I got a good jump ... and I knew it would be a close play at the plate. But I knew coach wouldn't hold me up in that situation just because of the length of the game and Chris Roberts would have been at second base, anyway."

Sabatini, Sanchez Vicario lose at Los Angeles Slims

MANHATTAN BEACH, California (AP) — Monica Seles overcame her own frustrations and Arantxa Sanchez Vicario in a semifinal match, 3-6, 6-1, 6-4.

Date, ranked 112th in the world and unseeded in the tournament, hammered five aces in the match and forced Sabatini to make several errors.

Corporate Report races to victory at Travers Stakes

SARATOGA SPRINGS, New York (AP) — Corporate Report, which was unable to catch Strike The Gold or Hansel in the triple crown races, beat both of them Saturday with a victory by a neck in the Travers Stakes for its first thoroughbred stakes victory.

Hansel, the Preakness and Belmont Stakes winner who was the 9-5 second betting choice behind 8-5 Strike The Gold, was in the battle from start to finish, but came up a short in the 1 1/4-mile race and pulled up after finishing.

Strike The Gold was not a factor.

Jockey Jerry Bailey said that in the stretch drive Hansel "started to favour his right front leg. He was in some distress."

"When we got to him, he was moving better and there wasn't any obvious lameness showing," track veterinarian Dr. Joan d'Alonso said. "But as a precaution, we put him on the van to

take him back to the test barn."

Strike The Gold, the Kentucky Derby winner, made a move from last place in the six-horse field on the turn but never got closer than fourth — which is where he finished. It was his fourth straight loss.

Fly So Free finished third, 2 1/2 lengths behind Hansel and three lengths ahead of Strike The Gold, who was followed by Lost Mountain and Tong Po.

Corporate Report, who had failed in seven previous stakes appearances, carried Chris McCarron to his second Travers victory in 2:01, 1-5.

It was Corporate Report's third victory, all this year, in 10 starts.

Corporate Report's triple crown record was a ninth in the Derby, a distant second in the Preakness and a fourth in the Belmont.

GOREN BRIDGE

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ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q.1—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:

♦AQ96 ♦AJ83 ♦AK52 ♦AQ1096
The bidding has proceeded:

North East South West North
1 ♠ Dbl Pass 1 ♠
Pass ?

What do you bid now?

A.—In support of spades you had a worth some 20 points. Bear in mind, though, that you have forced partner to bid and North could have a complete bust. Show your power by jumping to three no trump over four hearts. If partner is very unbalanced, he can still correct.

Q.2—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:

♦AK1083 ♦763 ♦962 ♦QJ6
The bidding has proceeded:

North East South West
Pass Pass 1 ♠ Pass
2 ♠ Pass ?

What do you bid now?

A.—In the old days you would have had to jump to three diamonds, crowding the auction unnecessarily when you don't yet know where or at what level you want to play the hand. These days a two-over-one response promises at least one more bid, even if a passed hand if partner changes suit, so you need bid only two diamonds for the moment.

Q.3—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:

♦A10943 ♦K7 ♦K96 ♦AJ6
The bidding has proceeded:

South West North East
1 ♠ Pass 3 ♠ Pass ?

What do you bid now?

A.—When this hand cropped up in a rubber bridge game, South rebid three no trump to show his stoppers, and a slam was missed. After a jump shift, the primary duty is to set a possible trump suit, and you should almost always raise partner with three trumps to a high honor. Bid four diamonds.

Tappin each collected their third gold.

The men's basketball team matched the bronze of the baseball team — and their compatriots in women's basketball. The men beat Cuba 93-74 in a brutal game that nearly broke out into a brawl, then had to sit and watch, with a tug in their hearts, as Puerto Rico beat Mexico 77-65 for the gold.

"It was tough," centre Mike Peplowski of Michigan state said. "Anytime you're playing for the United States in any kind of sport, anything less than a gold medal is sub-par. There was a big sense of defeat, a big sense of not accomplishing what we came here to do."

"When we lost against Puerto Rico, it was hard to swallow and hard to chew on. But then we realised, 'hey, we could either come out here and do nothing, and just play and not care, or we can come out here and do something.'"

The rough play briefly took everyone's mind away from the fact that this was the fifth consecutive major international event the United States left without a gold medal. Since the 1986 World Championship there have been two silvers — 1987 Pan Ams and 1990 World Championships and these games.

Six players touted out and the frequency of the calls by the officials probably prevented a fight in the tense, packed arena.

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Financial Markets
in co-operation with
Cairo Amman Bank

Foreign Exchange Market Summary (August 12 - August 16, 1991)

NOTWITHSTANDING the continued cautiousness shown by the much debated Bundesbank council meeting that was held Thursday, a change of sentiment towards the dollar/mark evolved Tuesday as market participants realised that expectations of a German interest rate hike were already factored in. But the dollar's sharp rally came Friday ending the week with an average two per cent gain in the dollar against European currencies implying a loss for those who went against the trend last week.

The dollar edged marginally lower Monday in a directionless market, after failure to break resistance at 1.7350 marks triggered selling, while speculation continued to support the mark. The dollar started the week with what turned out to be its lowest closing levels of the week against European currencies at 1.7246 marks and 1.6975 dollars to the sterling pound.

A new scenario was starting to evolve Tuesday as market participants realised that a one per cent rise in German discount rate and an 0.5 per cent to one per cent rise in the Lombard rate were already factored in current exchange prices. Expectations thus began to build up for a possible rise in dollar rates after the Bundesbank meeting Thursday. The U.S. currency fact started its gradual rise, encouraged directly by a stronger than expected 0.5 per cent rise in July's retail sales, breaking resistance at 1.73 marks but failing against 1.7350 marks.

Several factors helped to relatively strengthen the dollar Wednesday within a tight range ahead of the Bundesbank council key meeting the following day. These involved breaching resistance at 1.7350 marks in Europe, a positive but expected Consumer Price Index and short-dollar covering on higher expectations of a dollar rise. The strong mark sentiment started to subside as analysts ruled out the possibility of an unanticipated hike in German interest rates in view of the political domestic and EMS pressures, in addition to a statement by the German economics minister condemning any interest rate rise, but profit-taking at 1.74 marks con-

tined the U.S. currency.

The much awaited Bundesbank council meeting Thursday ended with a one per cent rise in the discount rate but with a mere 0.25 per cent rise in the Lombard rate again expectations of at least 0.5 per cent. Yet the dollar's rise continued. Observers maintained that the U.S. currency had already been over-bought leaving less room for manoeuvre (i.e. for much higher rise). Rumours about a potential Bundesbank intervention around 1.75 marks further contained the dollar, especially in the Far East and Europe.

The dollar rallied Friday ending the week at its highest closing levels in New York, at 1.7645 marks, 137.31 yen and 1.6582 dollars to the sterling pound. The unanticipated sharp rise was triggered by the release of a number of favourable U.S. economic data ranging from June's lowest, but expected, trade deficit since eight years, standing at \$4.02 billion, to a rise of 0.5 per cent in July's industrial production. Capital utilisation in July also rose to 79.7 per cent against expectations of 79.4 per cent. Some observers however were still pessimistic about the dollar's prospects in the medium term, attributing its jump to technical factors in a chart-driven market and convinced that the positive data only sparked the rise.

Breaching resistance at 1.74 marks in New York Thursday, they added, had been a key technical signal as it enhanced its rise to new target levels. They further maintained that the market needed consistent positive U.S. economic data to improve the trade deficit in the rest of this year," a trade ministry official said by telephone.

The latest revised forecast of what has become a politically troublesome issue for President Roh Tae-Woo would top the previous record shortfall of \$4.8 billion last year.

The country's Economic Planning Board initially forecast a \$2.5 billion trade account deficit for the whole of 1991, but the estimates have been steadily revised throughout the year. The previous forecast was \$6 billion. "The revised, worsened forecast is mainly attributable to expected increases in imports of machinery products, crude oil and construction materials outweighing stagnant exports, trade officials will predicted.

Ministry officials expect that imports will stabilise later in the year while exports in steel, electric products and electronics will strengthen.

Under the revised forecast imports on a cost plus insurance and freight (CIF) basis are expected to increase to \$81.5 billion from the original projection of \$79.5 billion, the official said.

Free-on-board (FOB) exports this year will likely remain at the projected \$73.5 billion.

South Korea's exports totalled more than \$83 billion on a customs-cleared basis last year while imports stood at 69.8 billion.

The country's trade shortfall has already hit \$8.1 billion in the first seven months of this year, with FOB exports standing at

LOS ANGELES, California (R) — Bankamerica Corp, which has made a rapid comeback from billion-dollar losses to become the dominant west coast bank, is now primed to overtake Citicorp as the top U.S. banking group.

In its latest move, the San Francisco bank last Monday announced a merger deal worth more than \$4 billion with Los Angeles-based Security Pacific Corp, which will put the merged company only one rung behind Citicorp in terms of assets.

"(The new) Bankamerica will be number one in terms of capital, equity and market capital. In some ways those numbers are more important than asset size," said Raphael Soifer, an analyst with Brown Brothers Harriman.

Citicorp Chairman John Reed has said problem loans and the need for higher reserves against potential losses on them, will constrain his company's operations and earnings for some time.

Bankamerica, on the other hand, is flush with capital. Even after tackling Security Pacific's problem loan portfolio, analysts say the new bank should be able

to make large strides.

Making the merger work will be a formidable task, with success hinging as much on the California economy as on the team of executives putting the package together.

But while analysts have concerns about the California economy, they have confidence in the executives.

"These are people who have shown they know how to cut costs," said Brown Brothers' Soifer.

Achieving economies of scale will be key to transforming Bankamerica into an earnings powerhouse in the next few years.

Richard Rosenberg, the bank's chairman and chief executive, is emphatic the firm is committed to this goal. "We will be sensitive to human issues but the message is we are committed to the tough decisions to make this work," he said.

Upon taking over the chair

from A.W. Clausen last year, Mr. Rosenberg focused on making Bankamerica the top west coast bank.

Earlier this year, he went after Bank of New England but lost to Fleet Norstar Financial Corp Inc and the leveraged buyout team of Kohlberg Kravis Roberts.

Mr. Rosenberg spoke Monday about the global Bankamerica that will come from the merger with Security Pacific, which also has a strong presence in Asia and a modest profile in Europe.

"We intend to build on the strengths of both institutions to create a highly profitable new banking enterprise that will become pre-eminent in the U.S. and even better-positioned on a global basis," he said.

"This (merger) is the platform from which they can go national." Keefe Bruyette and Woods analyst Donald Crowley said of the combination with Security Pacific.

Bankamerica seen on its way to becoming top U.S. banking group

Egypt to triple cotton exports and free prices paid to farmers

CAIRO (R) — Egypt will revive its flagging cotton industry by tripling exports this year and ending the state monopoly, the head of the state firm has said.

"We have lost a lot of foreign market through high prices and lack of supply," Mr. Shouman said. "This is why we have allocated a fixed quantity this year for export."

Local yarn and textiles companies could import cotton to make up for any shortfall, Mr. Shouman said.

"In previous years, there were restrictions on imports but these are being lifted too," he said.

Cotton farming employs about 650,000 people in Egypt and supports a textiles industry which accounts for over a quarter of total manufacturing output.

Mr. Shouman said although the state had allocated 850,000 feddans (360,000 hectares) last year, farmers only grew cotton on about 315,000 hectares, about 12.5 per cent of total arable land.

Exports last year were almost double the actual quantity shipped, Mr. Shouman said, but contracts with eastern European countries and the Soviet Union were scuttled because they lacked the funds to pay.

The former communist bloc of eastern Europe accounted for about half of Egyptian cotton exports until 1989.

Mr. Shouman said cotton would be priced on the export markets with an "appropriate premium" over other brands.

The new state holding company for cotton — one of a string of such firms appointed to overhaul Egypt's public sector in line with the government's economic reform programme — would appoint its management by the end of the year, Mr. Shouman said.

S. Korea faces record \$8b trade deficit

SEOUL (R) — South Korea faces a record \$8 billion trade deficit this year with soaring imports of machinery, oil and construction materials outweighing stagnant exports, trade officials have predicted.

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The country's trade shortfall has already hit \$8.1 billion in the first seven months of this year, with FOB exports standing at

\$39.6 billion and CIF imports at \$47.7 billion. The deficit was \$2.68 billion in the same period last year.

At a meeting with reporters earlier this month, Assistant Trade Minister Yu Duck-Hwan said the bulk of the machinery imports were being made to modernise and automate factories to restore South Korea's export competitiveness.

Many have blamed Mr. Roh and his government, which faces general and presidential elections next year, for the lacklustre performance.

The country's current construction boom has prompted sharply increased demand for building materials. South Korea has become a net importer instead of a net exporter of these items.

Mr. Yu also noted that imports have steadily increased as South Korea, under heavy pressure from its major trading partners, opened its once tightly closed domestic markets to foreign goods. He said the government was committed to continued trade liberalisation.

"Some scholars say the trade deficit is the price we pay for democratisation," Mr. Yu said.

But some South Koreans worry

that the price may be too high.

Worries about the trade deficit, and its effects on South Korea's newfound but somewhat fragile prosperity have found their way into the country's freewheeling newspapers and even man-in-the-street discussions.

Many have blamed Mr. Roh and his government, which faces general and presidential elections next year, for the lacklustre performance.

And, as befits South Korea's essentially confucian society, calls for restraint in consumption, tighter discipline, particularly by unionised workers, and hard work are increasing.

"But the most fundamental cause of Korea's waning export performance is a lack of philosophy on the part of our leaders," veteran journalist Kim Young-Won said in a column, published in The Korea Herald, echoing the thoughts of many South Koreans.

"Conspicuous at the highest level of government is a chronic lack of a sense of perspective and peripheral vision," he said.

German privatisation agency sells more than 3,000 eastern firms

BONN (R) — Germany's treuhand privatisation agency said it had sold about a quarter of the state-owned Eastern German enterprises it inherited during the unification process last year.

Agency President Birgit Breuel said the Treuhand had sold more than 3,000 of the firms it is charged with rescuing, selling or closing down.

This was between 20 and 30 per cent of the total load, she said, although exact calculation was difficult because many of the original 8,000 firms in the Treuhand's charge have been split into several smaller units.

Breuel told a news conference the earnings from privatisation up to the end of July totalled 12.5 billion marks (\$7.3 billion).

"What we are selling best at the moment are construction companies, which is a sign that recovery is taking place in that sector," Breuel said.

Seeing signs of a general economic turnaround in the former communist East, she said Treuhand-administered companies had begun hiring this year for the first time.

About 20,000 workers had been hired by firms not yet privatised and the agency expected the total to reach 80,000 by the end of this year.

Since the introduction of a market economy in the east 18

months ago, output has slumped, unemployment has soared to more than one million or 12 per cent, and hundreds of thousands of others have only kept their jobs through state sponsorship.

Breuel said those facing redundancy included some of the 125,000 workers at some 600 companies now in the process of being closed down as unsaleable.

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World News

Yugoslav army enters troubled town; jets attack Croat positions

BELGRADE, Yugoslavia (AP) — Federal forces pounded Croatian positions from the ground and air Saturday in their heaviest involvement in Serbo-Croat fighting since a ceasefire was declared 10 days earlier.

The combat in and around the town of Okucani shattered the ceasefire, prompting the federal presidency to meet in urgent session.

The Yugoslav News Agency, Tanjug, reported an unknown number of people were killed in fighting between Croatian security forces and ethnic Serbian militias at Okucani and that another 25 people were injured or missing.

Virtually all civilians have left the town, Tanjug said, located about 110 kilometres southeast of Zagreb, capital of the independence-minded Republic of Croatia. The town is controlled by ethnic Serbs, whom the Croats accuse of opposing their independence bid. Croatians accuse federal troops of siding with the Serbs.

The army sent 23 armoured vehicles and 11 trucks into Okucani Saturday afternoon to separate the warring sides, Tanjug reported, but fighting was reportedly continuing.

In Stara Gradska, Croatian forces blew up a bridge over the Sava River 11 kilometres south of Okucani to halt an army column

trying to approach the town, Zagreb television reported. The river forms Croatia's boundary with the Bosnian Republic.

Earlier the military opened fire with artillery on a roadblock consisting of trucks parked on the Croatian side of the bridge, setting them ablaze.

Also in Stara Gradska, air force fighter-bombers attacked a building used as barracks for Croatia's paramilitary Peoples' Guard after one of its reconnaissance planes was fired upon from its roof, according to an air force statement carried by Tanjug.

The presidency demanded an immediate end to the fighting.

"The ceasefire must be strictly respected, guarantees (regarding the separation of forces) given by all sides should be fulfilled," said a statement from the presidency carried by Tanjug.

A Yugoslav ceasefire monitoring team left Belgrade Saturday for eastern Croatia. Other groups were to leave Sunday, Tanjug quoted Dragan Musulin, deputy head of the presidency's information service, as saying.

The latest fighting comes only three days before a meeting of the country's feuding leaders, where an attempt will be made to agree on Yugoslavia's future structure.

More than 200 people have died in the clashes that broke out

after Croatia declared its independence from Yugoslavia on June 25. Ethnic Serbs, who account for almost 600,000 of Croatia's 4.75 million people, want to remain part of Yugoslavia.

The federal armed forces, whose officer corps is predominantly ethnic Serb, have said they are only trying to keep the two sides apart and prevent further clashes.

Meanwhile the last time Bosnia exploded, all of Europe shook.

Seventy-seven years ago this month, armies mustered by Europe's great powers began World War I — sparked by the assassination of the heir to Austrian throne, Franz Ferdinand, by a Serb nationalist in Sarajevo.

Now, bitter ethnic warfare in neighbouring Croatia threatens to once again ignite the volatile mix of Muslims, Serbs and Croats in the Yugoslav republic, formally known as Bosnia-Herzegovina.

"Everything that is happening in Yugoslavia is a pale picture of what would happen in Bosnia if there were clashes," said the republic's Muslim president, Alija Izetbegovic. "We have to be much more careful."

Ethnically and geographically, the republic is at the centre of Yugoslavia's secessionist and political struggles.

To the north, the breakaway republics of Slovenia and Croatia have fought to fragile truces with federal forces. The southern Republic of Macedonia has scheduled an independence referendum for next month. Hardline Serbia and the bulk of the federal army lie directly east.

So far, the only obvious effect of the fighting in the other republics is a lack of gasoline. But tension is not in short supply.

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, 42 per cent of the population is Muslim, considered a nationality in Yugoslavia. About a third is Serb, and 17 per cent is Croat.

While the Croats are mostly in southwestern section of the republic, Serbs and Muslims are sprinkled together in 102 of the 109 communities of Bosnia-Herzegovina, said Information Minister Veljko Ostojic.

The three groups have not co-existed easily.

Orthodox Christian Serbs living there were subordinated to Muslims for centuries.

In the 1940s, Croatia's Nazi puppet government slaughtered thousands of Serbs and others on Bosnian territory. Muslims and Serbs battled one another in World War II, and some Muslims now worry Serb and Croat might settle differences by carving up Bosnia-Herzegovina.

A relatively small group of young Bosnians are drawing informal groups from Serbia and Croatia into a small peace movement.

Mr. Izetbegovic suspects that an invitation by Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic to form a new Yugoslavia out of the three republics not pushing for independence — Serbia, its ally Montenegro and Bosnia-Herzegovina — is an effort to create a Serbia-dominated nation.

"The people of Bosnia-Herzegovina cannot accept a partial Yugoslavia," said Mr. Izetbegovic, who described Mr. Milosevic's proposal as "the beginning of a big Serbia or a small Yugoslavia."

Mr. Izetbegovic said if Bosnia-Herzegovina is left in a smaller, Serbia-dominated Yugoslavia, he would seek independence — a move that could open up the republic to a federal crackdown.

The new state would have a population of some 13.5 million, about 65 per cent Serb and more than 2 million Muslims.

"Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina cannot accept any kind of Yugoslavia unless we are in a state with the majority of Serbs," said the information minister, Mr. Ostojic, a Serb.

Mr. Milosevic has tried to lure support of Muslims by saying they would have No. 2 status in the smaller Yugoslavia, said Stevan Kluic, leader of the Croatian Democratic Union in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

"When he surrounds them... there will be no talk of rights," he said.

Croats have long accused Mr. Milosevic of inciting unrest among Serbs in Croatia with the goal of redrawing Yugoslavia's internal borders and creating a "greater Serbia."

After Bosnia-Herzegovina threw out Communist rulers in elections last year, Mr. Izetbegovic's Democratic Action Party, the Croatian Democratic Union and the Serbian Democratic Party formed a coalition.

Despite competing interests and underlying distrust, the shaky government has held together.

Hurricane heads for U.S. coast

MIAMI (AP) — Hurricane Bob, the first of the Atlantic season, moved steadily north Sunday and was expected to strengthen as it 80 mph (130 kph) winds swirled toward the North Carolina coast.

The hurricane was upgraded from a tropical storm Saturday, causing forecasters to post coastal alerts from North Carolina north to Delaware.

Hurricane Bob was expected to shower the outer banks of North Carolina with rain Sunday and the eye could move over shore late Sunday night or early Monday, said forecaster Max Mayfield.

"I would like it clearly understood that the army must have nothing to do with politics," Gen. Nawaz said in orders issued to the army on Saturday, his first working day since taking over as chief of army staff Friday.

Ms. Bhutto has repeatedly accused the chief minister of Sind province, Jam Sadiq Ali, of harassing her party. She says as many as 5,000 party workers have been jailed on trumped up charges.

The government has denied her accusations.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's new army chief, General Asif Nawaz, has pledged to support democracy and warned the armed forces to stay out of politics.

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An Asian diplomat in Beijing said China sees the Cambodian issue as a way to improve its international standing. Speaking on condition of anonymity, the diplomat said China would not do anything to jeopardise its relations with the other permanent Security Council members.

China and Vietnam said after high-level talks in Peking this month that they wanted to normalise relations after more than a decade of hostility.

Talk of a possible "red solution," where Vietnam and China support opposing sides, grew even though their joint statement supported a U.N. peace plan.

The Cambodian broadcast said concern over a separate peace process was "unwarranted." It said all of the warring Cambodian factions have accepted the U.N. plan as the basis for a settlement and would negotiate the rest of their differences.

The comments were broadcast Friday. A text was seen Sunday in Bangkok.

It said the Sino-Vietnamese rapprochement has "not affected the U.N. peace plan in the least."

It added that Vietnam's new premier, Vo Van Kiet, had denied that Hanoi and Peking have struck a secret deal.

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